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SUBJECT: PORTUGAL'S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES

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¶1. (SBU) In response to reftel request, the following is guidance on the Community of Democracies (CD), the role the U.S. can play in shaping both the work of the GOP-led CD Working Group "Regional and Interregional Cooperation for Democratic Governance," and priorities for Portugal's upcoming CD Presidency to begin at the end of the Bamako Ministerial in November.

¶2. (SBU) U.S. Goals for Portugal's CD Chairmanship: Although in the run-up to its fourth ministerial, the Community of Democracies remains in the early stages of its development and potential. Some international organizations have stepped up interaction with the CD and even begun concrete projects with considerable promise for success, such as the Organization of American States-African Union Democracy Bridge project. However, the U.S. would like to see more such projects and the active support of governments and organizations for such efforts. To that end four CD working groups in various areas have been created to promote and develop concrete initiatives in between ministerial meetings. The U.S. expectation is that Portugal's Presidency from November 2007 to November 2009 of the CD will strengthen and augment those efforts.

¶3. (SBU) The U.S. is also actively pressing for the UN Democracy Caucus (UNDC - an outcome of the Warsaw CD ministerial) to develop and pursue a common agenda across all UN organizations. The UNDC should focus initially on pressing for continued focus by the UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF) on civil society, improvements in the grant making process, and most importantly additional contributions by member states to UNDEF. The UNDC could also strive to promote democracy education initiatives through UNESCO, while at the same time working to make the UN Human Rights Council more effective and credible. As part of its upcoming CD Presidency, the U.S. would urge Portugal as an initial priority to concentrate on turning the UNDC into an effective policy bloc of committed democracies, mirroring the efforts and will of the Community of Democracies.

¶4. (SBU) Portugal as WG Leader: We urge Portugal to drive the Working Group to develop and implement one or two projects promoting regional or interregional cooperation. Time is beginning to run short and this WG is already behind the work of other CD WGs. Portugal's support of the OAS-AU proposed Democracy Bridge, a concept first recommended by the Americas regional group at the Santiago CD Ministerial, is an example of how the CD can promote concrete projects. We urge Portugal, as WG Chair, to develop input into the OAS-AU Democracy Bridge project, which is now expected to take place in July. We also urge Portugal to include NGO participants in future WG meetings, as the synergy resulting from governmental and civil society policy and program development cooperation is a key tenet of the Community of Democracies.

¶5. (SBU) Response to Ukraine's WG Proposals: Ukraine's general work plan seems very general and lacks concrete, "implementable" projects. Department would be curious to learn what the 10 year work plan would involve and what the deliverables would be. The suggestion to meet three times this year to implement the work of the WG strikes us as too few meetings to accomplish hard deliverables by Bamako in early November. However, Kyiv's idea to support nascent democratic habits seems like a concrete, achievable and useful project. The suggestion on supporting nascent democratic habits is a good idea, but the question in return is: how? In particular, a conference targeted at emerging democracies, perhaps held on the sidelines of the CD ministerial in Bamako might be a useful event and removes the possibility of Ukraine linking this event to its attempts to host the next International Conference of New or Restored Democracies (ICNRD). (Note: The Government of Ukraine has announced its intention to host the next ICNRD. The Department opposes any linkage between the Community of Democracies and ICNRD, as the ICNRD has universal membership, thus undermining pro-democracy actions by including the efforts of those with no obvious interest in advancing democracy. End Note.)

¶6. (SBU) Portugal as future CD and future EU President: As President of the EU in the second half of this year, Portugal could make increased European Commission interaction and a public diplomacy effort to increase EU-wide interest in the CD one of its Presidency goals. This could jumpstart a potential focus in the upcoming Portuguese CD Presidency to increase regional and interregional cooperation and drum up greater interest in CD.  
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